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**HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 15**  
**46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003**

**INTRODUCED BY**  
**Andy Nuñez**

**A JOINT MEMORIAL**  
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
**ENVIRONMENT TO COOPERATE IN INVESTIGATION OF FOOD SAFETY AND**  
**RECOMMEND LEGISLATION FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FORTY-SIXTH**  
**LEGISLATURE.**

**WHEREAS, several instances of food contamination have**  
**occurred in other states that resulted from improper food**  
**handling; and**

**WHEREAS, public health is at risk from improper handling**  
**of meats and vegetables by food handlers in retail food service**  
**businesses; and**

**WHEREAS, federal law provides for meat inspection at the**  
**processing facilities and state regulators provide inspection**  
**of retail facilities, but food handling represents a critical**

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1 gap in the chain of food safety; and

2 WHEREAS, the problem is not in the condition of food  
3 processing facilities but in the knowledge of the proper  
4 handling procedures and education; and

5 WHEREAS, raw food is an inherently dangerous commodity if  
6 not handled properly; and

7 WHEREAS, visual inspection for cleanliness and unsanitary  
8 conditions cannot accurately determine the presence of harmful  
9 bacteria, and under normal processing conditions, not all  
10 harmful bacteria can be totally eliminated; and

11 WHEREAS, proper cooking and handling prior to consumption  
12 is the only true safeguard to prevent bacteria growth; and

13 WHEREAS, educating food handlers at the consumer level as  
14 to the proper temperature of food and proper procedures for  
15 handling food will provide a safe and cost-effective deterrent  
16 to food contamination;

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
18 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the  
19 department of environment be requested to establish a task  
20 force to evaluate the need for public education programs in  
21 proper food handling and to recommend legislation for the  
22 second session of the forty-sixth legislature and to involve  
23 representatives from:

- 24 A. retail food handling businesses;  
25 B. the agricultural extension service;

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- C. the meatpacking and processing industry;
- D. the New Mexico livestock board;
- E. the restaurant and food service industry; and
- F. other interested parties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretaries of health and environment.